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BY CONGRESSMAN CHARLES F. BASS

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As a husband and a father, I believe it is our moral obligation to ensure that the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which provides support for the victims of violence and resources to bring their perpetrators to justice, is reauthorized. Before it adjourns, Congress must put partisan differences aside and work together on this incredibly important subject.

VAWA, which was authorized in 1994, is critical to providing support to a network of agencies across the country that are working to end abuse and violence against women and children. Organizations like the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence rely on VAWA to support programs around the state, including crisis centers for sexual assault victims, child advocacy programs and the sexual assault nurse examiner program. VAWA not only provides grants for these types of organizations, it emphasizes a coordinated response from various stakeholders in the community's public safety network, including law enforcement, prosecutors, health professionals and service providers to respond to and prevent violence.

I had a chance to tour one such program on Court Street in Keene earlier this summer. The Monadnock Center for Violence Protection serves all of the towns in Cheshire County, as well as 14 towns in western Hillsborough County, by operating a crisis hotline and offering crisis intervention, counseling, a confidential shelter for victims, self-help support groups and referrals. They've aided thousands of women since their inception more than 30 years ago and deserve our support for the good work they do in the Monadnock region to help victims move on with their lives. While touring the facility, I was able to meet with the individuals that run the center, hear stories of survival and learn about how VAWA-supported programs are able to help domestic abuse victims in the Monadnock region.

It is for this reason that I am deeply concerned that programs like the Monadnock Center for Violence Protection will not have the appropriate resources they need to assist victims of violence without an appropriate VAWA reauthorization.

Reauthorizing VAWA isn't and shouldn't ever be a partisan issue.

The Senate overwhelmingly passed a bipartisan version of the reauthorization in April that included broader protections for all victims of violence, including Native Americans and LGBT victims. Unfortunately, the House version of VAWA did not include these expanded protections and would have had a direct impact on funding for some of the crisis centers in New Hampshire that have helped hundreds of victims in our state last year alone. Because of these troublesome provisions, I could not support the House bill. Before the House passed its flawed VAWA bill in May, I worked with seven of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in urging House leadership to bring up a bipartisan bill for a vote. I have said all along that we can find common ground to work together on a bipartisan bill, like the Senate did, to protect victims of abuse.

Despite this stalemate with two different versions of the bill, I am hopeful that Congress can

come together and pass compromise reauthorization before the end of the year. I wrote to the Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader urging action on a compromise this month for the sake of victims everywhere that rely on these vital programs for assistance.

Thousands of New Hampshire women depend on VAWA to keep their schools, homes and workplaces safe. It is through VAWA programs that victims of abuse gain the support and assistance necessary to move forward with their lives. Working together to end violence is an issue we can all agree on, and passing a bipartisan VAWA reauthorization should be a no-brainer.

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